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ABSTRACT

Reasons for the job selections of 64 associate degree nursing graduates were examined in a pilot study at Purdue University. The basic research question was whether nursing graduates initially view "maintenance" or motivational factors as more important. Based on Herzberg's theory of motivation, information is provided on maintenance or hygiene needs of an individual: security, economic, physical, social, status, and communication. Motivational needs are also identified. Fifty-three respondents considered the method of delivering nursing care in an agency to be significant to their choices. Fifty ranked primary care as the most valuable system. Modular nursing closely followed, but team nursing and functional nursing, in that order were ranked significantly lower. The most important variables influencing g aduates' first choice of employment reflected a mixture of maintenance and motivational factors. The majority regarded working close to home and salary as the most significant ones. A certain kind of job opening and orientation programs were also important. It is noted that although many hospitals allocate sizeable funds to recruitment, the respondents did not rate recruitment programs as important to their decisions. A questionnaire is appended. (SW)

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Why AD Graduates Choose Their First Jobs

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A pilot study examines the variables which may influence graduates' decisions.

Call-outs

1. Local competitions for graduates continue despite the economy.
2. How much do demographics count?
3. Motivation is the central problem.
4. Local recruiting strategies did not influence these graduates significantly.

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From the age of 9 until she died at age 95 in 1932, Miss Polly Gadsby wrapped elastic for the same company. For the longest career in one job, The Guiness Book of World Records informs us, she set a record no hospital employee is likely to match.[1] Why she worked for 86 years wrapping elastic is not the point which concerns us here. Why Miss Polly chose that company to work for, and what kind of environment kept her there for so long, are. Although the depressed economy has indeed increased the number of nurses returning to the work force, nursing administrators continue to be concerned about the job hunting behaviors of new graduates. There are always shortages of nurses in specific areas and particular kinds of practice.

Conversations among the teachers of Purdue University Calumet and administrators of affiliated clinical agencies revealed that competition for nursing graduates certainly did exist in our area. At their

annual meeting to share information, these interested parties decided to ascertain what recruiting strategies health care agencies were using and how far nursing graduates viewed them as motivating their choice of initial employment. For that purpose, we decided to question our associate degree nursing graduates about their selections.

Background studies

Relatively little has been written about why nurses select one employment setting over another: although statistics were mentioned in regard to employment patterns, specific variables were not identified. In 1977, Weisman found no distinction between experienced and recently graduated nurses in turnover patterns and rates, job hunting behaviors, and job satisfaction levels.[2] The Nurse Career Pattern Study, which the National League of Nursing conducted in 1975, revealed a modest effect of educational preparation on job behavior. Among all the surveyed graduates who had entered nursing programs in the fall of 1962, 47 percent changed jobs at least once during the first year following graduation: 48 percent among Diploma graduates,

40 percent among Associate graduates, and 51 percent among baccalaureate graduates.[3] A 1973 survey of 5,000 registered nurses found that, while most nursing graduates took their first professional job in the same geographic area in which they had completed their nursing education, they moved shortly thereafter: single and younger nurses were found to be the more mobile.

Domestic status influenced nurses' choices significantly. Married female nurses constitute over 70 percent of the female registered nurses. Among them, higher wages reduced the number of hours worked. Furthermore, as their husbands' after-tax wage rate increased, nurses tended to work fewer hours. Depending on her age, a white registered nurse would work 5 to 17 percent fewer hours should her husband's wages rise 10 percent.[4] The presence of children influenced the labor supply as well. Among registered nurses under 25 years old, a newborn child was associated with a labor supply reduction of about 881 hours per year. As RNs grew older, this negative influence of very young children on nursing worked declined.[5] As the children grew older, their influence on nurse labor

supply also diminished substantially.

The first six month period of any newly hired nurse's experience is the most critical one for affecting productivity, skill learning, attitudes and turnover.[6] Whether the nurses are experienced or recently graduated, most of the newly hired RNs' problems arise from inconsistencies between the nurses and the hospital's expectations.[7] Adjustment to the hospital organization rather than role transition, then, was the salient problem. Kaelin and Bliss described the need to assess all newly employed nurses' skill performance without identifying background differences.[8] Indeed, failure rates were higher for experienced nurses (29 percent) than for the new graduate (16 percent). This suggests that experienced nurses required additional preparation to function competently. The work environment rather than the background of the nurses or their experience level appeared to be the critical factor in determining employment patterns.

The most crucial influence in initial job selection, however, is motivation, whose general importance to health care productivity most authors

emphasize. Herzberg's seminal works in this field rest on the premise that people try to avoid pain and discomfort and seek pleasure and happiness.[9] Certain factors in life are needed just to maintain a healthy state between happiness and unhappiness -- the "OK" state in which most people feel most of the time. The principal function of these 'hygiene' factors is simply to prevent dissatisfaction. Although they remove obstacles to positive job attitudes, they neither motivate the "caring" attitude basic to quality health care nor encourage growth. Nevertheless, hygiene factors are primary considerations in maintaining the person's relation to his work. Exhibit I details applications of these hygiene factors which respond to RNs' needs in the hospital setting. Like any other workers, nurses will try to find an employment setting which will at least maintain a middle state of happiness. Therefore, the presence of such responses may indeed influence their job selections.

True motivators, however, must go beyond removing obstacles. Rather, they must be task factors which can stimulate workers to greater effort. Further, the chosen motivators must reward them with experiences

which satisfy them psychologically.[10] Exhibit II lists some nursing motivators in terms of Herzberg's categories. In reviewing Herzberg's model it is apparent that the classification of maintenance and motivational factors are not clearly demarcated. In some instances a factor may be viewed as both a maintenance factor as well as a motivational factor in application, i.e., salary.

Hackman's 1975 study formulated five core dimensions in quantifying job satisfaction. This analysis emphasized motivational over hygiene factors.

1. The utilization of a variety of skills, abilities, techniques and procedures.

2. The extent to which an individual can identify the completion.

3. The degree to which the job has an impact on others.

4. The extent to which an individual can act independently in job-related responsibilities.

5. The degree to which the job itself provides information on performance.[11]

Traditionally, managers have recognized survival needs and have ignored innate potential for growth.

They have preferred not to address motivators at all or have tried instead to use hygienic factors to increase productivity. Indeed, policies in health care administration have implied that health care providers can be moved with hygiene factors but that true motivation comes only from within the individual. Yet the more hygiene factors are used as motivators, the less motivation results. Consider this situation. A raise of $3,000 one year and $2,000 the next can easily cause dissatisfaction. The hygienic factor of $2,000 was mistakenly used as a motivator. Even if the same raise of $3,000 were given the second year, it would simply maintain the hygienic factor. The level of motivation would not be affected.

The AD graduate's views

Given this background, we decided to ascertain the responses of nursing students to motivators and hygiene factors. The basic question we were studying was: Do nursing graduates initially view hygiene or motivation factors as more important? The answers to our questionnaire showed the directions in which sixty-four nursing graduates looked as they sought their first

professional work experience.

We composed the questionnaire shown in Exhibit III; several Department of Nursing faculty members critiqued it to establish face validity. During a class about one month before graduation, this questionnaire was distributed to the graduating class of seventy-one Associate Degree students.

The sixty-four responses were tabulated by hand. Factors were ranked and weighed individually and as a group. We used a weighing system to determine the most and the least significant factors influencing this group in their choices of initial employment.

Fifty-nine respondents had already selected their places of initial employment after graduation. As students, seventy-three percent had previous, paid working experiences in the agencies they selected. The majority (69 percent) had some student laboratory experiences -- usually in medical-surgical nursing -- in the institutions they chose. Only seven would be working in agencies which had no clinical laboratory experience contracts with the university.

Exhibit IV shows the five most and the five least influencing factors according to these graduates.

Since these variables are common in the nursing world, there was no attempt to define any of them. Notice that, on the questionnaire, Section V reversed the order in which options were listed in Section IV.

Fifty-three respondents (83 percent) considered the method of delivering nursing care in an agency significant to their choices. Fifty ranked primary care the most valuable system. Modular nursing closely followed, but team nursing and functional nursing, in that order, were ranked significantly lower. Again, no attempt was made to define these commonly used terms.

Some conclusions

Our pilot study, despite its great limitations, did demonstrate to us the necessity for continuing investigation in attracting and retaining nurses. While attracting new graduates is one problem, their widely reported mobility makes retention another.

In our study, the most important variables influencing AD graduates' first choice of employment reflect a mixture of maintenance and motivational factors. The majority regarded working close to home and salary as

the most significant ones. A certain kind of job opening and orientation programs were also important to them.

Some of the variables which influenced graduating students least surprised us and suggest further study. While not important to young unmarried graduates, married graduates with pre-school children might have regarded day-care facilities differently from this sample group. Job-sharing, a relatively new concept, is not commonly practiced in the community health care agencies surrounding our university. Thus, unfamiliarity with the idea may have been responsible for the low ranking. Again, family responsibilities, single parenting, etc., ~~may~~ might have ~~affected~~ altered their ranking job-sharing among the least significant influences. Investigations in attraction and retention should probably concentrate more attention on the influence characteristics of such demographic variables.

Although many hospitals have been spending a great deal on recruiting, these respondents did not rate recruiting programs as important to their decisions. Employing Herzberg's motivational factors more specifically -- as we have tried to do in the analysis

in Exhibit II -- might lead to different, more effective strategies than those which hospitals currently try. The many possibilities his theory suggests are certainly worth wider examination.

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Exhibit I

~~Table 1.~~ HERZBERG'S THEORY OF MOTIVATION
Adapted for the R.N. in the
Hospital Setting

Needs of the Individual

MAINTENANCE (HYGIENE)

Factor	Examples
Security	Fairness with assignments on units, Consistency in interpersonal relationships with health team members, Reassurance from supervision and other health care providers, Friendliness with staff and patients, Seniority, Rights of health care providers, Grievance procedure
Economic	Wages and Salaries, Automatic Increases, Profit Sharing, Social Security, Workmen's Compensation, Unemployment Compensation, Retirement, Paid Leave, Insurance, Tuition Reimbursements, Discounts (such as Pharmacy, Continuing education classes)
Physical	Work Layout (modular or central nursing studio), Job Demands, Work Rules (such as shift rotation), New Health Care Equipment, Location, Grounds, Parking Facilities, Aesthetics, Lunch Facilities, Rest Rooms, Temperature, Ventilation, Lighting, Noise, Day Care Facilities for children
Social	Work Groups, Coffee Groups, Lunch Groups, Social Groups, Staff Parties, Ride Pools, Outings, Sports, Health Professional Groups, Interest Groups, Recruitment
Status	Job Sharing, Title (Clinician, Clinician Specialist, N.P. R.N.), Furnishings, Location, Privileges, Relationships, Company Status, Student Extern Program, Health Care Team
Communication	Nursing Guidelines, Nursing Standards, Job Instruction, Work Rules, Team Meetings, Unit Talk, Newspapers, Bulletin Boards, Quality Assurance, Policy and Procedures, Grapevine

Exhibit II

~~Table 2.~~ HERZBERG'S THEORY OF MOTIVATION
Adapted for the R.N. in the
Hospital Setting

MOTIVATION	Needs of the Individual
Factor	Application
Meaningful Work	Delegation, Access to Information (orientation program, patient satisfaction inventory)
Recognition	Freedom to Act (responsibility and accountability), Atmosphere of Approval (with Doctors, staff, etc.) Merit Increases (clinical ladder), Discretionary Awards
Achievement	Profit Sharing, Company Growth, Promotion, Work Itself (Feedback from patients - health care members), Education, Clinical Ladder Concept, Memberships, Involvement, Goal-Setting (for patient and self)
Responsibility	Problem Solving (Nursing process)
Advancement	Performance Appraisal (Clinical Ladder)
Growth	Utilized Aptitudes (Clinical Ladder)

Exhibit III

Survey of Criteria Influencing the Choice of Initial Employment by A.D. Graduates
(Class of 1982)

INSTRUCTIONS: Please Circle the Appropriate Response(s)

I. What agency will you work in upon graduation from the A.D. Program?

1. St. Margaret
2. St. Catherine
3. St. Mary Mercy
4. Methodist
5. St. Anthony
6. Munster Community
7. Our Lady of Mercy
8. Other _____

II. Did you have any paid working experiences as a student (i.e. extern program) in the agency in which you will be employed:

1. Yes
2. No

III. Did you have any student laboratory experiences in the agency in which you will be employed?

1. Yes
2. No

A.III. If the preceding answer is yes, please identify those experiences.

1. Maternal-Child Health Nursing (NUR 225)
2. Introduction to Nursing (NUR 115)
3. Medical-Surgical Nursing of Adults & Children (NUR 116)
4. Medical-Surgical Nursing of Adults & Children (NUR 224)
5. Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing (NUR 240)

IV. Please identify those factors which influenced your choice of employment post graduation. Rank the top five influencing factors. Place the numbering (1-5) in the space provided with (1) being the most significant factor.

_____ a. tuition re-imbursement
_____ b. student laboratory experience in agency
_____ c. student extern program
_____ d. staff development program
_____ e. scheduling flexibility
_____ f. salary
_____ g. recruitment
_____ h. proximity to home
_____ i. orientation program
_____ j. non-shift rotation
_____ k. location (innercity or suburban)
_____ l. job opening in clinical field of choice
_____ m. job sharing
_____ n. innovative nursing practice
_____ o. fringe benefits
_____ p. familiarity with agency
_____ q. day care facility
_____ r. clinical ladder mobility
_____ s. other _____

V. What factors do you consider to be the least important in selecting a job in nursing. Place the number in the space provided with (1) being the least important.

_____ a. clinical ladder mobility
_____ b. day-care facilities for pre-school children
_____ c. familiarity with the agency
_____ d. fringe benefits
_____ e. innovative nursing practice
_____ f. job opening in clinical field of choice
_____ g. job sharing
_____ h. location (innercity or suburban)
_____ i. non-shift rotation
_____ j. orientation program
_____ k. proximity to home
_____ l. recruitment
_____ m. salary
_____ n. scheduling flexibility
_____ o. staff development programs
_____ p. student laboratory experiences
_____ q. student extern program
_____ r. tuition-reimbursement program
_____ s. other _____

VI. Is the nursing delivery system of an agency a significant factor in influencing your choice of employment?

1. Yes
2. No

A.VI. If you answered Yes to Question VI, please rank order the delivery systems you value. Rank the systems (1-5) in the space provided with (1) being the most valued.

_____ Team nursing
_____ Modular nursing
_____ Primary nursing
_____ All R.N. Staff
_____ Functional

Additional Comments

EXHIBIT IV

Factors Influencing AD Graduate Choices of Employment After Graduation

Most Influencing Factors:	Classification	No.	Priority Weight* (1-5)
1. Proximity to home	Maintenance	41	103
2. Salary	Maintenance & Motivation	39	122
3. Job opening in Clinical Field of choice	Motivation	25	58
4. Student Extern program	Motivation	25	63
5. Orientation program	Motivation	25	68
Least Influencing Factors:			
1. Day care facilities for pre-school children	Maintenance	51	68
2. Job-sharing	Maintenance	30	78
3. Student laboratory experiences	Maintenance	29	73
4. Recruitment	Maintenance	28	73
5. Non-shift rotation	Maintenance	16	52

*A weight of 1 identified the most influential factor therefore the lower the priority weight given the same ranking the more significant the factor.